

8/7/00

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-6, 9-20, 23-51 are pending in this application. Claims 31-51 are withdrawn from consideration. Among the remaining claims (i.e., claims 1-6, 9-20 and 23-30), claims 1, 15 and 29 are independent.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 (CURRENTLY AMENDED): A distributed system having a server device connected with, through a communication network, a plurality of user terminal devices each having means for image-taking means, means for user status recognition and means for displaying, the server comprising:

user presence recognition means for recognizing whether each user exists at his terminal device;

first receiving means for receiving status information of a first user including a pictorial taken image of the first user from a first one of the plurality of user terminal devices;

second receiving means for receiving a request of a second user requesting the pictorial taken image of the first user from a second one of the plurality of user terminal devices;

determining means for determining an interuser distance between the first one of the plurality of user terminal devices and the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices based on a predetermined rule;

~~processing means for processing the pictorial image of the first user based on the interuser distance determined at said determining means~~ executing an image process as increasing intensity of a mosaic process or a gradation process according as the interuser distance

determined by said determining means becomes far away, wherein said processing means decreases the intensity of the mosaic process or the gradation process when it is recognized by said user presence recognition means that any of the users does not exist; and

transmitting means for transmitting the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user processed at said processing means to the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices.

2 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED): A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein each of said user terminal devices is set within an organization having plural places of duty, and the interuser distance is a distance in terms of said organization.

3 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED): A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein said interuser distance is a physical distance between the first one of the plurality of user terminal devices and the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices.

4 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED): A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of user terminal devices is set within a virtual space, and said interuser distance is a distance in terms of said virtual space.

5 (CURRENTLY AMENDED): A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein said processing means includes filtering means for filtering the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user based on the interuser distance.

6 (CURRENTLY AMENDED): A distributed system according to claim 5, wherein said interuser distance is determined to be smaller as [[the]] clarity of the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user becomes higher.